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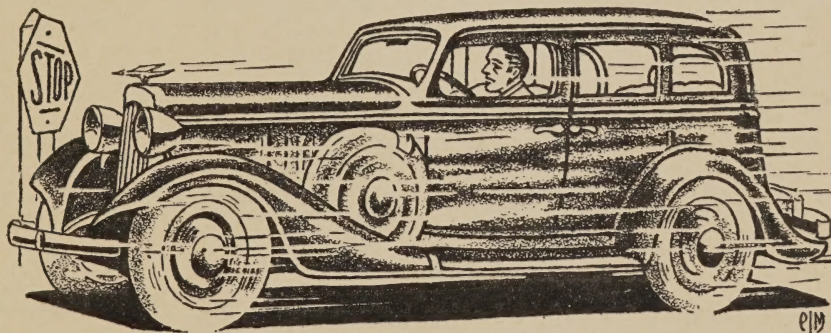
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# DRIVE SAFELY



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS





# DRIVE SAFELY

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**THE** automobile is a convenience, an economic necessity, and a means of recreation for millions, but, it is a highly dangerous machine when improperly handled. We cannot get along without it. Neither can we, as a civilized people, permit the continuing slaughter of 36,000 persons every year in automobile accidents. **We must learn to drive safely.**

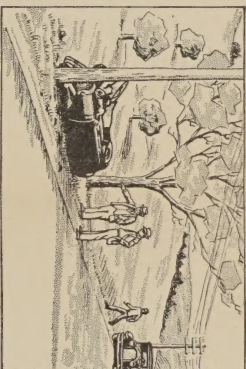
Highway and traffic engineers of the Federal, State, and local governments are doing everything in their power to make highways safe. Automobile manufacturers have designed their vehicles so well that mechanical failure is seldom a cause of accident. Responsibility for almost every motor-vehicle accident can be traced directly to the motor-vehicle driver, and it is to him that this message is addressed. If you are a driver, this is an appeal to **you** to drive with consideration for your neighbor as well as for yourself, and it gives a word of advice as to safe driving methods.

Are you a safe driver? Whether or not you have ever had an accident, are your habits likely to cause one? The locomotive engineer must undergo a long apprenticeship and be subjected to frequent physical examinations. The aviator must pass strict tests. Are you as well fitted for your job as these men are for theirs? Can you keep an even temper, or do you become irritated? Do you get "rattled"? Are you able to control that occasional impulse to act recklessly? Is your mind always on your driving? Do you act quickly and reliably in emergencies? Do you know what the law requires of you in every situation? Judge yourself critically, recognize your weaknesses, and take all necessary precautions because of them.

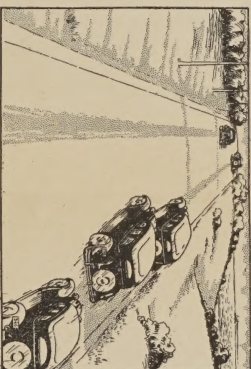
## First Responsibilities

Your responsibility for safety begins before you move out of your garage. **Both you and your car must be properly equipped and ready for the road.**

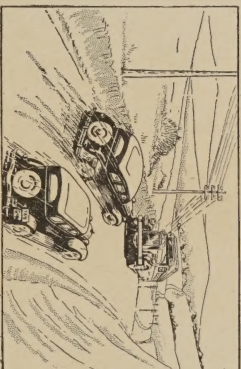
A modern automobile leaves the factory in safe condition. With proper care and adjustment, it can be kept so. Failure of steering gear or brakes can be avoided easily by periodic inspection and adjustment. The discarding of worn tires will largely prevent blow-outs and greatly reduce skidding. Your headlights must not only illuminate your course at night, but they must also be so adjusted that they will not throw a blinding light into the eyes of other drivers. If an accident happens because of the failure of any part of your car's equipment, the fault lies in your neglect in 99 cases in every 100.



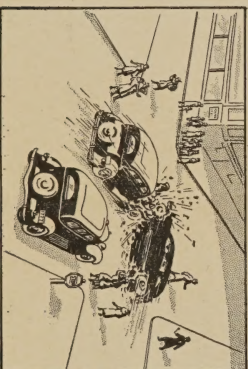
Speed is the greatest single cause of highway accidents.



Do not attempt to pass unless there is a safe passing distance in clear view.



Passing on hills and curves causes thousands of accidents each year.



A stop sign has only one meaning. STOP!

Glaring headlights are frequently encountered on highways and cause many accidents. They can be corrected easily.

As for yourself, before you venture upon the public highway, be sure that you know how to control your car and that you are familiar with the general rules of the road and with all local regulations. These are usually available in printed form and may be obtained from police, traffic, or motor-vehicle officials.

## General Rules of the Road

The common rules of the road for motor-vehicle drivers are:

- (1) Drive to the right when meeting vehicles or where approaching vehicles may be hidden from view.
  - (2) Drive to the left when passing vehicles from behind.
  - (3) Do not pass a vehicle near the crest of a hill or on a curve where there is the remotest chance that you will unexpectedly find your way blocked by another vehicle.
  - (4) Do not reduce speed suddenly or change direction without signaling.
  - (5) Always keep your car under control. A car out of control is like a runaway horse.
  - (6) Keep a safe, clear stopping distance ahead of you. If you have room to stop, you will not need to hit anything. This is perhaps the most important rule of all. It means that you must not follow the car ahead too closely, lest it stop suddenly. You must proceed at a safe speed and on your own side of the road when approaching hilltops, curves, or intersections at which the road may not be clear ahead of you. At night you must drive so that you can stop within the clearly illuminated distance ahead of you, remembering that dark objects are less visible than light-colored ones. You must cut down your speed when the road is slippery, because you cannot stop quickly.
- If all drivers scrupulously observed these common and general rules, there would be need for few other operating regulations, and those only to provide for unusual conditions of traffic.

## Special Traffic Rules

Because of the high speed at which motor vehicles are driven, and the differing amounts and types of traffic on various roads and streets, special rules and regulations are necessary to meet local requirements.

Traffic and highway engineers have devised a system of signs and signals to guide your action where these special rules are in force or where special care must be taken.



A red traffic signal means "STOP!" A yellow signal means "CAUTION." A green signal permits you to proceed—**provided you can do so safely.**

If a STOP sign is posted where a side road enters a main highway, **STOP!** And do not proceed until you are sure it is safe to do so. The driver on the main road expects you to stop, and if you surprise him by ignoring the sign you are likely to cause an accident.

### Other Aids to Safe Driving

Signs are posted on the roadside to tell you that you are coming to a place where special care is required, such as a railroad track, a hill, or a curve. **Obey them!** And proceed accordingly with due caution.

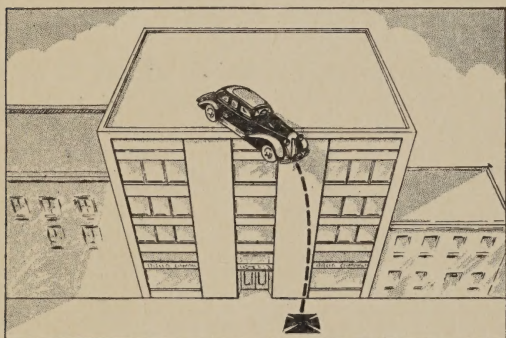
Other signs give you information regarding the nearness of schools, hospitals, and various places where vehicles or pedestrians are likely to congregate. **Pass such places carefully.**

Always take it for granted that the other fellow is thoughtless or irresponsible, and that he is likely at any time to do something unexpected. Your care can prevent many an accident that would otherwise result from his heedlessness.

Pedestrians are particularly apt to blunder into your path, often because of advanced age, infirmity, or the inexperience of childhood. Be alert and considerate, remembering that you yourself are a pedestrian much of the time. Always drive slowly when you see children playing near the roadway.

### Speed

**The most important single cause of accidents is speed**—too much speed in the wrong place. To save a few minutes, no one is justified



**At 40 miles per hour you are moving as fast as if you had fallen from the top of a four-story building.**

in risking death or a lifetime of disabling injuries. The law may set a speed limit, but the safe speed within that limit must be judged by you alone. **A car traveling 40 miles per hour is moving as fast as if it had fallen from the top of a four-story building**—and if it hits something solid the effect is just as bad. Remember, too, that you can stop in about 75 feet when you are driving at 30 miles per hour, but it takes 225 feet in which to stop from 60 miles

per hour. At a mile-a-minute speed you are moving 88 feet in a second, which means that in an emergency you will travel 50 feet or more before you can even push the brake pedal down. If you will always drive so that you can control your vehicle in any emergency, it is probable that there will not be an emergency.

### Finally

If you drive your car with due care, not as if you were afraid of it but with a healthy respect for its dangerous possibilities, you will join the great class of safe drivers whose accident-free record is not merely a matter of luck. **The safe drivers live longest and what is more important to the public they also let others live.**